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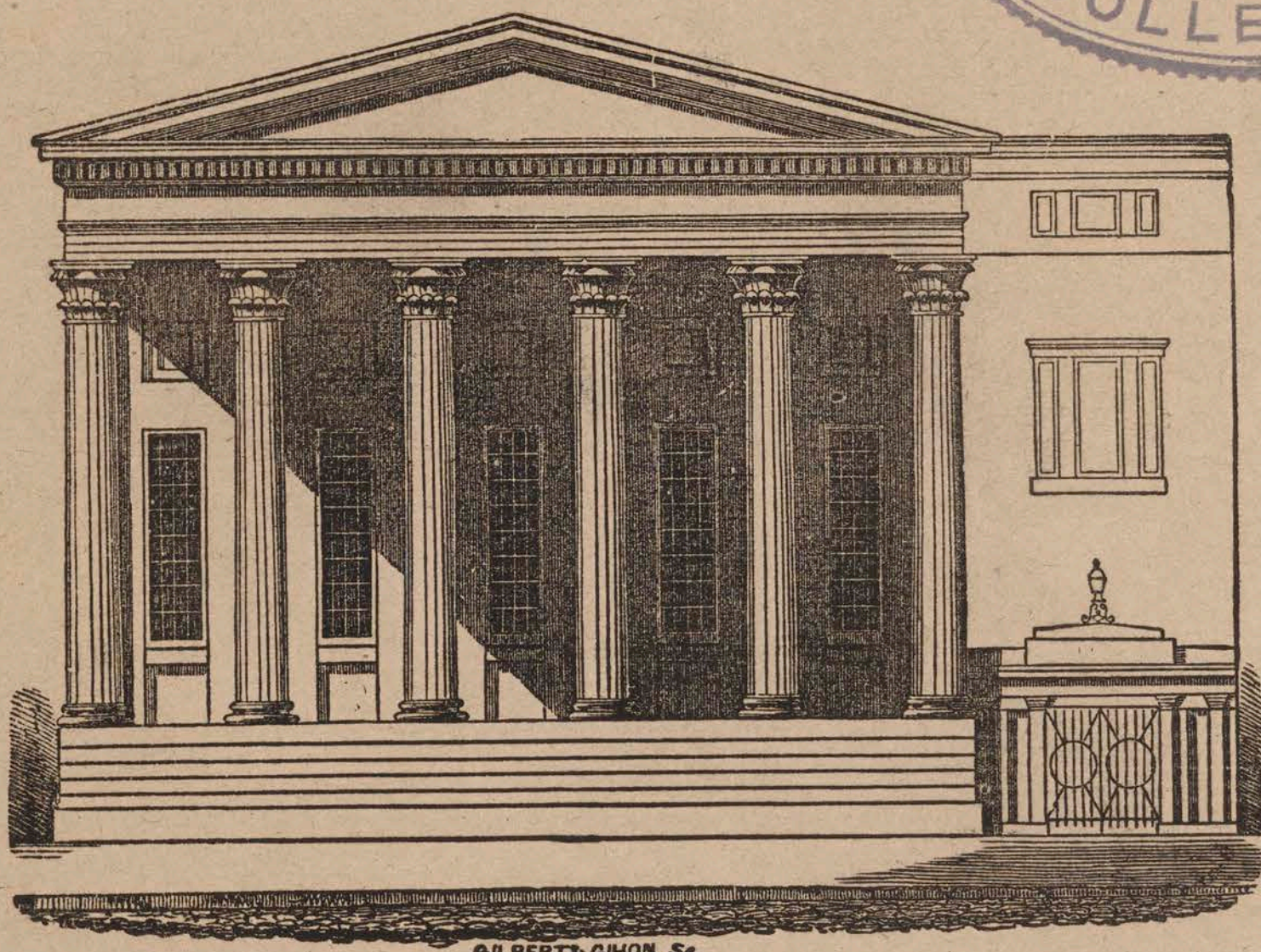
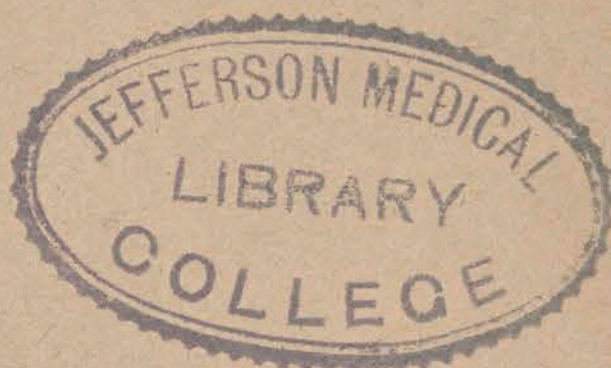
The Vocation of the Medical Scholar in Society.

AN

# INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

BY

CHARLES D. MEIGS, M. D.



DELIVERED OCTOBER 9, 1854.



INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

TO THE

CLASS OF MIDWIFERY, &c.

OF THE

JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE

DELIVERED WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1854

BY

CHARLES D. MEIGS, M.D.

PHILADELPHIA

T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS

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PHILADELPHIA, *October 19, 1854.*

DEAR SIR: The undersigned, a Special Committee,\* in behalf of the Class of the Jefferson Medical College, most respectfully solicit a copy of your Introductory Address for publication.

Trusting you will accede to our request, and to the wishes of our fellow-students,

We remain yours, very respectfully,

R. AUGUSTUS JONES,  
J. P. COLE,  
DAVID FLOURNOY,  
CHARLES FINLAY,  
A. P. MOORE,  
W. M. HUDSON.

TO PROF. MEIGS.

324 WALNUT STREET, *October 20, 1854.*

GENTLEMEN: I feel much honored by the wish expressed in your note of the 19th inst.

As the Class desires to make public the Introductory Address that I made on Wednesday last, I herewith place the manuscript copy at their disposal, begging, through you, to thank them for this, to me, most flattering request.

I am, gentlemen, with much esteem,

Your most obedient faithful servant,

CHAS. D. MEIGS.

Messrs. R. AUGUSTUS JONES, J. P. COLE,  
DAVID FLOURNOY, CHARLES FINLAY, } *Committee.*  
A. P. MOORE, and W. M. HUDSON.

\* The General Committee consisted of one gentleman from each State or Country, as follows:—

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## INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

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IN opening, for the fourteenth time, the annual course of my Lectures on Midwifery, and the Diseases of Women and Children, in this College, I heartily greet your presence here ; and with hopes that you may meet no disappointment in any just expectations of improvement or pleasure, I recur with pleasing remembrance to the former occasions in which we pursued together a course of studies tending to gratify all those who should perceive they made reasonable advances in the acquisition of useful knowledge.

There is nothing a man can do, so it seems to me, at once more pleasing and useful than to give instruction to ardent inquirers after information that should redound to their own benefit as well as that of society in general ; nor do I imagine that anything can more agreeably employ one's passing hours, than giving attention to pursuits which, at the same time that they enlarge and define our views of things, place within our reach the faculty and the means of doing great good to our fellow-creatures.

Surrounded as I now am with many Students, willing and even anxious to learn whatever I may be enabled to teach here, upon a subject of the very highest personal, public, and scientific interest, I feel animated by the scene and stimulated to undertake the duty of instructing them methodically, carefully, and copiously, so far as my ability may, to those ends, serve ; nor do I for a moment doubt that, provided only, I can attract and continually draw your attention to my words and demonstrations, you will make very good progress, with little trouble to yourselves, yet with solid profit as to your future business and your cares in building up your fortune or estate, which is, for most of you, a primary object—and ought to be, with every sensible man.



As we have many long weeks before us, to be given to the consideration of the Anatomy, Physiology, Therapeutics, and Surgery of Obstetrics, I do not think it would be expected of me now to deviate from a time-honored custom, and at once plunge into the examination of those elementary subjects which would furnish but a dull occupation for this evening; it is better to allow the evening to pass away while we consider certain generalities. Presuming, therefore, on your kind acquiescence, I shall venture to present to you some observations on the Vocation of the Medical Scholar in society; what that vocation is; what the moral, intellectual, and personal qualifications that are suitable to it; what promises and rewards it holds out to those that are called to it, and what benefits may enure to society from an elevated and honorable pursuit of it by the members of that class.

Though I am standing here prepared to lead your studies in *Obstetrics*, owing to the fact that I have been for a long time engaged in the practice of it, I have come to regard *it* as not the *least* complex of the medical studies, and as comprising a class of informations not the least important to mankind; and so, not the least deserving of your earnest and persevering attention. My acquaintance with it has been too extensive as a practitioner of it, not to have taught me that it is not, and never ought to become a mere Specialty to live by; for I am convinced that whoever should really desire to accomplish himself as an Obstetrician, must first become well versed in the various classes of the medical sciences, particularly embryology; and, if so, then he cannot but be a very thoroughly educated physician.

I do not here mean to speak of the embryologist as merely a natural-history-scholar, but as of one fully versed in embryology, as containing the history of development, its diseases and accidents. Development begins with the germinal spot and ends only with the last breath a creature draws, even in the extremest old age. He, therefore, who makes himself truly acquainted with the rise and progress of the development of organized bodies, is a man who has become thoroughly versed in both anatomy and physiology; and, since he knows the intimate nature and structure of the tissues, he cannot fail but be a pathologist also.

Having myself been more a general practitioner than a mere accoucheur, I feel also that I have a right to think and to speak



on the general topic of the profession in its largest sense; and even if I had passed a long life occupied solely in this very specialty, I have learned that that specialty is but a practice of *physic* with a *special* surgery and therapeutics superadded to it, which gives me a claim to be a physician as well as another. That same experience and acquaintance with these affairs has also taught me that few men, I among the number, have studied it as much as it ought to be studied, nor become so well educated in it as they should be. There are, indeed, many persons occupied in the various departments of our sciences and arts, who have not comprehended the real nature of the vocation of the Medical Scholar in society; suffering themselves to rest content with the smallest acquirements, and converting into a mere trade or avocation, what was designed to be only a liberal and exalted profession; and so, like the money-changers, the dealers in cattle, and the venders of doves that Christ drove out with stripes and scorn, converting our temple into a common market-place.

Not only will this charge be found true, as to a mercantile spirit actuating too many of us, but a heavier charge than that, which falls on numerous individuals who rest satisfied with the very smallest literary and scientific attainments—thinking it learning enough if it may but serve their turn, no matter how limping and lame they go; and yet, they claim to be in the Vocation of the Medical Scholar, and arrogate to themselves the power and graces of the scholarship.

But such people have no solid pretensions why they should be received into that class; for, in the idea of scholarship, there is included that of considerable learning, much wisdom, a high tone of morals, great moderation in all things, a philosophic self-control—and, more than all, a true charity and philanthropy, which moves all true members of the class to love learning and desire to communicate it and spread it abroad among mankind out of a conviction they have that, the more generally knowledge, and the love of it increases in the land, the more will the land be outwardly prosperous, and the more the people blest with security and tranquillity in enjoying the pure and satisfying fountains of happiness that the possession of education opens up to mankind.

If it is true that the department of knowledge called the Medical sciences does belong to physio-philosophy—and it cannot be denied



—then it is certainly among the very highest intellectual pursuits, and those who study those sciences successfully, are among the best educated of scholars.

Perhaps, however, it is true that the arts that spring from the knowledge of these sciences, as the art of the Surgeon and that of the Physician, may not rank so high among men as the pursuits of the Statesman, the Lawyer, or the Commander of armies; yet, as no objects of human research can be more comprehensive, since these seek to explain the laws of all animated nature, so, there can be none more ennobling, none more elevating to the soul than the sciences we pursue in order to obtain the knowledge of those principles, out of which we deduce our power to act as physicians and surgeons among mankind. I do not pretend to say that there have ever been any working-physicians, who have risen to the very highest rank in the vocation of medical letters; but while I admit that medical men, laboriously engaged in clinical duties, do not cultivate the sciences of Medicine so elaborately as they ought to do, I do say, that no man, who rests satisfied with inferior acquirements and content with a bare ability to get along, no matter how halting and blind, ought to pretend that he has rightly conceived of the Vocation, or done his duty, either in his own interest, or in that of the community in general; and far less to the Class wherein he has presumed to take a place of which he is in nowise worthy.

If any man, in following out a course of studies in this Medical Scholarship, would aim to rise to the very highest eminence of attainments in it; if he would desire to emulate, and even to rival the celebrity and power of a Haller, a Bichat, a Cuvier, a Coste, or a Schleiden, and a hundred others that I could name, let him not remain among us as a working-member in the Clinical classes of the profession, because the time demanded for the performance of duties as a servant of society, must ever prevent him from deeply engaging among libraries, books, and natural things, in researches that can, alone, lead to pre-eminent attainments in our philosophy. Working physicians and surgeons, therefore, can by no means hope to emulate the scholarship of those more fortunate persons, who are so happy as to devote their whole lives to philosophical pursuits, making of them their sole business and occupation. This, however true it is, does not afford the shadow of an apology for such scandalous deficiency as we have too many op-



portunities to observe among practitioners of physic; nor can a man lawfully tender, in excuse, as is daily done, the interruptions to thought, the carking cares, the harrowing anxieties, and the startling incidents and events of a life passed in the practice of physic or surgery. The excuse is unreasonable and unworthy of being proffered; it is an apology for idleness, and a confession of want of love for letters, and of imperfect appreciation of duty to self and to the world, and will never be presented by any person who has, truly, a call into the Vocation of the Medical Scholar.

Inasmuch as happiness never dwells with those who live in continual conflict with the dictates of duty, you may think I hold out small prospects of enjoyment to those among you who seek to join a class so situated, insisting as I do on the one hand that you ought to exhibit great proficiency, and avowing on the other hand that you will not have leisure to acquire it; but, I do know, that for any man who really loves study, and resolves to accomplish much, there is no such word as fail—if there is no time he will create it—he will find a thousand fragmentary portions of time, not fitter to be cast away because of their minuteness than are fragments of fine gold, and he will *end* by making himself well acquainted with the *principles* as well as the *details* of his vocation. He will know how to apply those principles scientifically, and scorn to be a mere traditional and empirical practitioner of an art, that is susceptible of demonstration as to its laws, its indications, and its operations.

Mr. Babbage constructed a machine by which to solve the most complicated mathematical problems; so, doubtless, he might be able to compose an instrument with which to practise a traditional or empirical medicine, and which should be quite as respectable and as venerable as some of our routineers in medical practice. Medicine is a high philosophy, whose application to human uses is made out of an intimate knowledge of the laws and constitution of the animal economy, and of those things called medicines.

I conclude, Gentlemen, that you have a deep concern to look into these matters, and *see*, if I have spoken reasonably of them, what plans and resolutions you shall yourselves form, adopt, and carry out; and you ought to inquire what good it is that may enure to yourselves if you should come into the Vocation of the Medical Scholar—what manner of men are they that are suited to



it by natural temper, disposition, or inclinations, as well as what profit it is to society when the duty is well and ably done. It is a great thing, in the very heyday of youth and hot blood, to devote one's whole life and faculties to this special and exclusive industrial pursuit, and, shunning all others beside, restrict one's self solely and always to the care of sick and wounded people !

I have to suppose you have already thought of these things, and come to your resolves ; some, out of a preference to literary and philosophical pursuits ; some, because they anticipate the acquisition of ease and fortune ; some, from an ambitious desire of distinction, which is known, occasionally, to reward high merit among medical men. I trust there are many who have sought and found a higher and holier motive in that charity which is the crown of the human virtues, and that love that passeth the ordinary understanding of men.

Whatever may have been the motive, no person here should conceal from himself the solemn truth that this vocation must confine him always near the persons and the chambers of the sick, the wounded, and the dying, and that the sick chamber and the bed-sides of dying men are not the places to seek for happiness, except under rare, extraordinary circumstances ; that sick people are not the most agreeable companions—being, for the most part, tyrannical, dissatisfied, fretful, and exigent of all possible services and regard—and yet, it is among these we are doomed to pass the greater part of our lives. Is there happiness to be found even here ? Yes—but not in the FACT—but only in the PRINCIPLE ; and physicians may find even great happiness in the consciousness of the good they do ; in the pride of their opinion, which rules and reigns in the most awful circumstances, and in that respectful consideration which belongs to persons of their intellectual and social rank.

I spoke of Medicine, just now, as an industry or industrial pursuit. The last U. S. census returns 44,000 men as engaged in it—as their occupation or business—but it is one that might be regarded as cyclical in its nature, for it has neither beginning, middle, nor end ; it stops not nor stays for Sabbath nor holiday ; day and night are alike in it, and winter and summer autumn and spring, afford no cessation or rest to the busy effort of the practitioner. Are you willing to devote yourselves so !



Any prudent man, entering on a life-long undertaking, ought to consider what rewards he shall have, what returns for his labor, what provision for his existence and comfort and that of his family—what respect, and what station or rank he may expect to acquire.

In some nations the calling of the physician is a degraded one, very little above that of the barber surgeon; but, in the United States, it is one highly respected, and that admits a man into the best and most polished societies: its rewards are considerable, in a pecuniary sense, and the families of medical men are generally found to possess great advantages in pushing their fortunes, and taking reputable positions in the world. But these rewards are in the ratio of the real deserts of the person, his fitness for the vocation, and his fidelity in answering its requisitions.

One ought, therefore, to examine himself, and know whether he is fitted for the Vocation of the Medical Scholar. I say vocation, which is calling, not choice, nor selection. Is he called, like Samuel? and can he answer: Here am I? Is he by nature endowed with that beneficent and charitable temper, with that love for literature and philosophy that alone can render him both graceful and gracious in his rank and place?

How is it with the world? You shall see on every hand artisans who are not happy, because they were designed by nature to be professional men; farmers far more fitted to lead armies or sway in council; preachers more military than persuasive; lawyers and doctors, who, instead of cobbling bad causes and tinkering decaying constitutions, should employ their genius and talents in mending boots and shoes, and pans, and pots and kettles. There is in the world the greatest want of congruity between men and the work they have to do. They are out of their places; and never had any real vocation to their calling and occupation. Whenever men do succeed in their affairs, it is generally because there was found no want of congruity between their temper, their capacity, and their work or business; all these being so happily adjusted that time passes with them as merrily as the music of a marriage-bell. The man is not only happy himself because he is suited, but he sheds the radiancy of his own contented and prosperous life far and wide throughout the sphere of his influences.

There is a law of God which is expressed in the words: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread;" and it is a law that fits all



men, and is, withal, so beneficent that they are happiest who best obey it; for industry and occupation lead ever to contentment and happiness, while idleness and slothfulness are prolific of vice and misery, and lead to the commission of crimes. Yet, every man ought to have some adaptation, some vocation to the special way of fulfilling this law; especially since the progress of society has so complicated and multiplied the means of obtaining support in it, that it causes us to commit the greatest mistakes in the choice of a business or a profession.

I would not contend that, in the mechanical arts, it would be a matter of great difference whether a man should be, for example, a stonecutter, or a bricklayer, or a cabinet-maker, or a turner; but whether a man shall be a physician or a lawyer is a question of deep interest to the individual concerned in its solution. The Vocation of the Medical Scholar is to continual acts of pity, of sympathy, and charity; for, as there is nothing more pitiful than the state of a human being when, in the act of laying down his life on the bed of disease and incurable pain, he unrolls, to cast off forever, this mortal coil and go forth into that realm from "whose bourn no traveller returns;" so I conceive it impossible to look upon such ~~an~~ one without the strongest emotions of sympathy, pity, and pain. I regard it as a sort of agony to look into the countenances of the dying and follow all those changes of psychical and corporeal expression that are understood to mean the agony of death.

It is quite true that the sensitive mind is always painfully affected by the spectacle of any human pain, weakness, or decay; and, as we would rush to drag a stranger from the edge of a dangerous precipice, or plunge into the waves to rescue a fellow-being struggling for life in the waters, so we cannot but feel charitably, pitifully, tenderly moved towards our fellows in sickness; and out of this human, charitable sympathy, has sprung our vocation in society. It is instinctive; it is inevitable. It would be inhuman to refuse to be a physician when there is a clear call to that ministry.

But, the vocation of the Medical Scholar in society is to this end, and to this alone. That is his business. What business? To be sympathizing, humane, charitable; indiscriminating in charitable acts, affections, and sentiments; extending relief to all who demand the aid, without respect of persons or conditions. The beneficent power of physicians, like the early and the latter rain,



comes down on all alike. To help society ; to help mankind ; to live to do good, and only good, continually ; to be the discoverers and conservators of the means of healing ; interpreters of God's purposes in the creation of medicines ; promoters of education and learning everywhere—that's the business of the Medical Scholar ; that his Vocation in society.

It is no trade, it is a commission. Other men may have Trades ; we have a Mission to society. They make corn, wine, oil, cotton, silk. Some construct machines ; some labor in day's work ; some sail the ships ; some gather together the fruits of every clime, and the manufactures and products of every distant shore ; some preach the gospel ; some expound the law. But, as for us—we are to remain at home, to do good unto others.

Ah ! then, do you exclaim, are we missionaries ? Yes, truly, we are missionaries, appointed of Providence to obviate and console certain evils inseparable from the state of man in society. Our pursuits are of the nature of a religion ; and no person can deny that, in ancient times, Divinity and Physic were, not a combined, but a one and undivided ministry. The votive tablet suspended before the cella of the temple, the vows and sacrifices, the oracular response, constituted our whole practice ; for, two thousand years ago we were priests, though now we are called physicians ; being separated in form, but not in the spirit, from our origins.

In the Hippocratic age there was effected a revolution of the highest social importance ; and we at that time issued forth from our original ierological domain, and in that exodus became an independent Mission. But, that revolution never did, nor never can separate us so wholly from our origins as to break the common bond of high morals that forms the real basis of both missions. We are the least, but not to be despised for our littleness ; nor never can be while we reverence the principles on which we are founded. What principles ? *Morals!* The constitution of morals is in our decalogue : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself ;" an inscription that sums up and expresses the whole law.

Medicine then is founded on man's religious principle ; it is not, and never can be a mere passion or sentiment, and ought never to descend lower than this. If any man deny this, and yet claim to be of the Vocation, he shall be himself denied. I care not how high



his genius, how great his attainments, how splendid his fortune, how eminent his rank—if he deny this, he is not of the Vocation of the Medical Scholar in society, but a sorry trader, and a very miserable huckster in the wares of human pain, weakness, and death. Such a physician is a vampire, that lives on the corpses of men.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor; and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth *me* nothing.”

Now, if these burning words of St. Paul are applicable to, and are true of the pretended Christian, they are no less so of the man who pretends to be of the Vocation of the Medical Scholar in society—I speak not of so-called doctors, the homœopaths, hydro-paths, quacksalvers, advertising wretches, ignorant/clairvoyants, pirates of the health and the means of the weak and unfortunate—I speak only of such as are elevated to the height of an æsthetic perception and comprehension of the Vocation of the Medical Scholar. Such men will be always religious, their life is a religion. They have contemplated that indescribable countenance of the agonisant, and, moved by heaven-descended sympathy for their race, have striven these three thousand years to discover and apply those healing things that might, haply, postpone and save man, for a time, from that unutterable agony of death that all men shudder to think of. They cannot openly say, with Christ and the Apostles, *Theleis Ugies Genesthai. Egeirai arei tor grabbaton kai peripatei*. Wouldst thou be healed? rise, then, take up thy bed and walk—but a man called and duly fitted for the Vocation can do works that are akin to the miraculous.

It has ever seemed to me that a person doubting concerning the profitableness of this Vocation for society, might resolve his doubts, and find a warrant for professing it in the naked, undenied facts that there are “simples of a thousand names,” each with “their strange and vigorous faculties;” and that it has pleased Providence



to ordain the existence of what are called *medicines*, whose powers and nature are adapted to some certain ends.

Nothing in nature exists as accident. There is no plant, no animal, but it is the material representative of the Divine idea in its creation. But, that idea is an intellectual, a spiritual Absolute that was beyond and before the thing itself.

Now, there is a medicine, opium, of such power to alleviate pain, and cure diseases, so consolatory to the distressed, such a "sweet oblivious antidote," that it has been regarded as a special gift of God; nay, a *Magnum, opimum Dei donum!*

Will you say that opium is an accident in nature—that the plant that produces it was fortuitously composed? But the sleep-giving poppy is the only plant in the whole wide world, out of the many thousands of vegetables that yields this balm for our griefs: why not a thousand others? Do you believe that species is primordial, and that the generical and specific characteristics and properties of plants and animals are coeval with the Creation? Then you may venture to suppose it was fashioned and constituted upon a model pre-existing in the Divine idea of it—and arranged and prepared, form and substance, function and powers, in exact adaptation to a special end.

The root was planted in the soil, and lifted its light stem, guarded with leaves, upwards into the atmosphere, swelled out and opened its flower-bud, expanded its petals, filled out its capsule—and the whole life of that creature was designed and fitted for that strange vital chemistry that converted its juices into opium in its seedvessels.

What a far-reaching prevision of love! What curious kindness was it that adjusted all this excellent, this delicate force to the urgent wants and need of the sick and the wounded! The plant came *before* the pain; *it* was already BECOME, while the pain was only becoming, not yet become.

Can opium cure pain? Will opium relieve pain a thousand years hence, as it does to-day? Well, then, the remedy is already prepared, and waiting for the adaptation to the coming victims of otherwise remediless distress for a thousand future years. It was so in the beginning, it is so to-day, it will be so a thousand years hence.

But if these things may be admitted true as to this especial medicine, then why not true of all others in the class of medicinal



plants, each nicely adapted to some special end? I, for one, can thus sensuously find my own warrant to believe there was designed a Vocation of men to the Medical scholarship, which itself, also, is an adaptation, as well as an example of the fitness of things.

Who among you has looked into these things, and resolved to come into our Vocation, and give all his time, powers, and heart, to the great purposes of our ministry!

You had as well not touch it else! You had as well not handle it! Remember the son of Aminadab, at Perez Uzze! touch not what an impure hand might desecrate.

There are many things in this calling to gratify the intelligence and the affections. It opens up to a man an easy way to support and educate a family, and place them in positions to push their fortunes in this world; giving to him and them a station, or social position equal, in the United States, to that of any other class. If we could but organize as a brotherhood, as a college of American physicians, collecting within our own pale every worthy aspirant, we should become powerful for good, and in just the ratio of our beneficence possess influence, socially and morally.

You all know this, for you have observed with what respect and deference your own family physician is received at your father's house; and how medical men are highly considered, so they be only as discreet, wise, and upright persons as they ought to be; and the more, for their Vocation.

In general, no persons are more esteemed and relied on than physicians, whether in the chambers of the sick, or in society. Being commonly among the best informed there, and of sentiments and manners worthy of all commendation, he is a gentleman, who is really a physician in the sense of being a Medical Scholar. In some instances, even wealth has rewarded his efforts, when prudence guided the expenditure, and economy led to sure and safe investment of the surplus of revenue.

In the liberal professions the rewards are not a price, but fees—*honoraria*—it is a *quantum meruit*. A *quantum meruit*? Then let his deserts be great, and his emoluments will rise in the ratio of their augmentation.

But you know I am speaking of a Scholar-class, which means also a Student-class—a class of literary and scientific men, ever



delving in the mine of learning, ever striving to enrich the world with the wealth of knowledge relative to the calling.

This is true, and reasonably true, and the people think so. They want you to *know*—they claim that you *shall* know your whole art and the sciences on which it is founded; and they will pay you for that knowledge; since nothing is more indispensable for them when they do stand in need of it.

Therefore, if you want to make money; if you want to build up an estate; if you want to take an enviable position in society, you cannot make a better; you cannot make so good an investment to that end; you can do nothing that will *pay*, and *pay* so *well* as to invest your time in study, and in much study of medical writings and things.

Many a merchant goes into business upon a borrowed capital in money, strengthened with a solid credit for skill, application, and probity, and out of these he makes an early and easy fortune. You wish to go into business also, but on a capital which consists in your learning and skill and probity, and nothing else. You are to work on a credit system. Sustain that credit, then, in the only way it can be sustained, by proving your possession of the pretended capital in learning, skill, and honesty.

Merchants want accommodations from the banks. The banks will not lend them their money unless they keep large balances on hand with the cashier. If a merchant's bank account shows that he has a mean balance in the vaults of 20,000, or 30,000, or 60,000 dollars, the bank will gladly advance him 20,000 or 30,000 dollars, whenever he calls for a loan, not else—they will not trust him else. But your bank is the public confidence and respect. Pile up, therefore, your balances of learning, skill, probity, propriety, heart-someness, with them, and when you ask them for a loan they will be too happy to trust you; for they believe you can and will pay principal and interest without defalcation—yes, more than value received.

A student of medicine, then, I say, ought in his own interest to take just such views as these. He will lose no time; no, not a jot of time. An hour lost is lost for eternity; it can never be overtaken. The loss can scarcely be even repaired.

How much precious time is lost by students! How indifferent



are some to the duty they assumed to perform; nay, solemnly engaged with parents and friends to fulfil to the letter!

There is many a student whose father loved him so well that to afford him opportunity to advance his interests in the world, he has restricted brother and sister that he might give of his painful earnings, spared with difficulty, to promote his son in an enterprise wherein success alone can reward his sacrifices. Suppose such a case. Suppose those funds to be profligately wasted in riotous living, in theatres—in gambling-houses—among putrid prostitutes—at the dram-shop!

Why it is monstrous! I will hardly believe there is such a wretch alive. But yet again, who is the man most materially interested in this Medical scholarship, its success, its honor, its rewards? Who is he that should most strenuously aid to make it an honorable and high vocation? The student of medicine is the man most interested of the *whole* world.

The physician grown rich with years of labor; the professor, satisfied with the longest career, may retire and wholly withdraw and separate himself from all further connection with the class in which he has served and passed his whole life, from youth to age. The student is but now entering upon that very road which the other has traced to its end.

Let the student, then, do nothing—no, not the least thing—let him not sanction anything, any word or deed, that should haply bring discredit on the profession, out of which he hopes to draw wealth, reputation, and happiness. Let him frown down every act of irregularity, and check every indirection.

The deportment of the medical student should be seemly, earnest, grave, circumspect; it should always be governed by a wish and an endeavor to render, as far as in him lies, that class honorable and prosperous, admirable for its learning, and marked for its elegance and politeness.

What a cheering thought! How cheering to the physicians of the United States, if the classes now assembled in their several schools of medicine throughout our country should now, once for all, resolve to proceed through the whole business of all the sessions, without an act of irregularity, without the suspicion of the least indecorum, with a resolved industry in the pursuit after knowledge, that at the close, should enable each man to say he had passed the hours with great



profit, and as tranquilly and as pleasantly as at his own fireside! Is not such a consummation devoutly to be wished? Is it not even possible?

Every man cries out, elevate the profession; strive to augment its dignity and usefulness; let every man lend a helping hand in promoting, embellishing, expanding the area of a thing so useful to man, so arduous for the pursuivant. Well, then, the medical student is more vitally interested than any other person, and if he has a sensible regard to his happiness, he will, in his very earliest connection with it, extend a supporting and strong young arm in its behalf; and, when he comes to mingle with the strife of the world, he will have nothing to blush for in his own conduct or that of his fellows, and everything to hope for in their noble fellowship.

The benefits that would enure to society from the possession of a highly enlightened body of medical men are unspeakable and incalculable.

What would society do without its physicians? Suppose that at the same instant of time, in every country beneath the sun, every item of human knowledge, professional and domestic, of the nature and appearance of diseases, and the powers of medicines could be blotted out and cancelled in the minds of men!

Why what horror at the next hemorrhage—what panic at the spectacle of a gaping wound, and its madly rushing blood; what affright when convulsions should torture and rend and deform the frame; what helpless hopelessness in fractures and dislocations; what confusion and dismay on the outburst of pestilence!

I contend that society could not exist in civilization without us. Men would not march to battle, nor defend their towns and cities if unguarded and not cheered by their faithful surgeons and physicians. The medical staff of the army and navy are equally indispensable as the gun, the bayonet, and the bullet.

Read what Ambrose Paré has told us on this point, in his story of the siege of Metz.

Must we work? Why we go so slowly on in improvement that you must work if you would improve. I found in a recent examination of the literary history of childbed fevers, in which I turned the pages of the Greek, Roman, Arabian, and early and modern European physicians, that, from Hippocrates to Mercatus Lusitanus, not one single step in advance was made from the day when the wife



of Dromeades died with that malady, for upwards of two thousand three hundred years; and that, in a disease the most intelligible, the most fearful, the most disastrous, and so common, that there never was an age or country in which it was not habitually met with, carrying terror in its invasion, agony in its progress, and woe and grief, the most to be deplored as its frequent consequence. But now, since the early part of the present century, that we have made giant strides in progress, it is a happiness to cultivate a field whose harvest is white to the sickle. Our medical Scholarship has triumphed for man over a thousand obstacles, by means of a sound method in reasoning, and its interpretations are become so sure, that in many examples they vie in certainty and celerity of solution with the calculus itself. I invite you to enter into this hive of human industrials with the true spirit of the class, to view the vocation in its true light, and lend it all your heart and all your young strength.

It will make you happy. The final end of all human endeavor is happiness; and the busy spectacle of society is but a scene filled with figures running hither and thither in search after happiness.

But what is this happiness that all men seek for?

It consists in the enjoyment of agreeable sensations.

To be fed, clothed, sheltered, lend agreeable sensations. It is sweet to feel secure of life and property. It is glorious to belong to one's country; to watch her flag dancing in the wind, and know that its folds are a shield for all it floats over.

Love is sweet!

Woman is beautiful!

There is no place like home!

The name of father gives pleasure; and mother—she who enveloped us in the holy sanctuary of her arms! Ah, that *is* sweet!

That innocent virgin, the sister—is not the sister a gift from God?

One's own child—one's darling!

The beauties of nature furnish a thousand sources of agreeable sensations. Even the lower animals are subjects in which a feeling of rapture seems to live. An ox, a dog, a sparrow, a mocking-bird, take a sort of rapturous sensual delight in the green shady pasture, in the hurrying chase, in the downy nest, and the half inebriate song, as he poises him on trembling wings, high soaring above the topmost spray of his favorite tree, and pours out his liquid, his



intensified music, clear as the crystal fountain—as if he would bathe his spirit in melodies !

If we may venture to call these happiness, what shall we say of knowledge, or how compute the bounds and limits of his happiness whose life is shined upon by the bright radiant beams of science, and sanctified by the purifying influences of wisdom. Oh, what an enlarged liberty is that man's, whose intellect follows the plummet that dives to the bottom amidst the ocean of stars and constellations, and nebulæ of the firmament! What bliss for him whose soul gives back the reflection of the things and the incidents of the ages that are and those that are fled, and that is so replete with the intellectual images of all time, and all places, and all things, that it is become itself a cosmos! What a happiness to have even seen the man—how enviable his state! His years and gray hairs are but incentives to love and veneration. Of such a man, is it not true to say: "Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words, they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain."

The pleasures rise in the same ratio as the development of the psychical powers; and Oken has shown, in his zoological progression of the sensuous faculties, that they regularly augment from the lowest to the highest being—man, the crown and glory of all; man alone being a moral creature, and capable of true happiness.

If you would be happy, then, seek to know the earth and the world as God fashioned them upon the mould of the preformed Absolute—the Divine Idea of them; and, as all things that subsist are but the fixed, posited, material expressions of his thought, his will, his purpose as to them, the more we know them, the more do we comprehend the Divine Idea of them, and Him too, and ourselves. Let the scholar's soul become, as it were, a spiritual, intellectual reflection of the earth and the world, that through them he may discern himself, and his relations to his Maker and Father, and his fellow-man.

A man of nature is but a man-brute, an intensified brute; but an educated man is disenthralled of the chains of prejudice and passion; he is supposed to become virtuous in proportion to the expansion of his sphere of intellection; he is become free, indeed—but the ignorant is enslaved. The wicked are to be pitied. A wise man cannot be wicked. Wickedness is another name for igno-



rance. Let him, therefore, who seeks for happiness, seek her in the paths where wisdom treads. The educated and wise man takes ever an æsthetic view of things, and lives in the better world of mind; and surely, but for use and custom blunting our appetite and palling our desires, we might always, in the enchanting scenery of nature, discover, æsthetically, inexhaustible measures of delight and joy; rising to the height of a passion of curiosity and longing to know more, and still more of, and compass the meaning and purport of this great drama of creation, in which we are actors.

The man whose dead dull soul will not stir at such suggestions, is like the "fat weed by Lethe's wharf;" and every true disciple and brother of the Scholar class is like the first man opening his eyes on the wonders that surrounded him when just issued from the Creator's plastic hand, when, as new-waked from soundest sleep, soft on the flowery bank he found him laid. Milton's soul, which was a flame of fire, conceives of him as we ought all to be. The poet says:—

"As, new-waked from soundest sleep,  
Soft on the flowery bank I found me laid,  
Straight tow'rds heaven my wond'ring eyes I turned  
And gazed awhile the ample sky; till, raised  
By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung  
As thitherward endeav'ring—and upright  
Stood on my feet. About me round I saw  
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,  
And liquid lapse of murm'ring streams. By these,  
*Creatures*, that liv'd and mov'd, or walk'd or flew;  
Birds in the branches warbling. All things smiled;  
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.  
Myself I then perused, and limb by limb  
Surveyed; and sometimes went, and sometimes ran  
With supple joints, as lively vigor led;  
But who I was, or where, or from what cause,  
Knew not. To speak I tried, and forthwith spake.  
My tongue obeyed, and readily could name  
Whate'er I saw. Thou sun I said, fair light!  
And thou enlightened earth, so fresh and gay!  
And ye that live, fair creatures! Tell,  
Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus—how here?  
Not of myself! By some great maker, then,  
In goodness and power pre-eminent!  
Tell me how I may know him!—how adore  
From whom I have that thus I move and live,  
And feel that I am happier than I know!"



Was the blind bard of the skies rapt and soaring in an æsthetic realm when, in those exquisite lines, he portrayed the sentiments of delight and wonder with which every man of us ought to look out upon the beauties and charms of creation?

But let us descend from the heights to which a real perception of the truth will always raise us, and if we must, come down to the dull world, to which our dross and clay hath bound us physically; we have to confess, after all, that the man who will not take care of his estate is a fool. This, I admit to be true, and a sad truth it is, for it makes us that we are, alas, not so really philosophical as we might be. And yet, some men do live above the world.

"Let us go to the country; what a beautiful day to botanize," said Lorenz Oken to Agassiz, one day, as they unexpectedly met in a street in Vienna. "Yes; a charming day for a walk among the flowers." "Let us go, then," said Oken. "But, see; it is already high noon, and we should dine before we go into the fields: that takes up time." "Not much; I will dine at the restaurant, and join you directly." "Nay, nay, but come and dine with me," said the great philosopher. "I shall be too happy to do so," replied the young naturalist. "You know not what you say, for you know not how I dine." "I shall be happy to dine with Professor Oken, any how." "Come, then; let us hasten."

Now, what was Oken's dinner? What think you it was? and you—and you?

Boiled potatoes!

I have been told that half the laborious scholars of Germany are willing to dine on boiled potatoes, so they can use their money to lay it out in books and libraries.

Oken was not more independent than the late General Ogle, when, in his stump-speech at an election-ground, he erected his tall form above the expectant crowd, and uncovered his gray hairs that the world might see how white they were. The story is told in a late publication.

"My hairs are white," said General Ogle, "like the fields of Judea; ready for the harvest of the Great Reaper, and these once stalwart limbs are beginning to shrink from their duty. But my soul *laughs* at the lengthening shadow of my years.

"*Let* this crazy frame decay; *I* shall break out of it one of these days like a sun-burst on a mountain-top, when he comes



from his chamber in the east to run his glorious course round the arch of heaven.

"*I* am not old—and when you bury my bones—remember, *I* am not dead. Peter was bewildered when he proposed to build tabernacles in the Mount of Transfiguration; when we have done our duty here we go up higher; and when this frame has LOST its strength and beauty, the kindly mother, EARTH, will sweeten and freshen it again, and the limits of its life will widen into glorious LIBERTY! Hallelujah! The light of these eyes is growing dim in the light of PARADISE!"

All the works and desires of men end in death at last, and though we know in our heart of hearts how true this is, yet we continually seek the phantom of happiness, where, in the true guise of knowledge, and wisdom, and virtue, she herself never trod.

We all walk, gentlemen, in a vain show; we over-act our parts. It would be wiser could we find happiness within ourselves, rather than look for it in the applause of mankind. Let us strive to be like Wordsworth's kitten playing, like an Indian conjuror, with falling autumn leaves:—

Quick as he in feats of art,  
Far beyond, in joy of heart  
Were her antics played in the eye  
Of a thousand standers-by,  
Clapping hands with shout and stare,  
What would little Tabby care  
For the plaudits of the crowd?  
Over *happy* to be proud,  
Over *wealthy* in the treasure  
Of her own EXCEEDING pleasure.

*Nov. 19. 1854.*







